

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, May 10. 1707.

IN my Addressing all Parties to reconcile common Differences in Matters, to Charity and good Neighbourhood, or in my modern Phrase, to Union Princi-

ples; I cannot let slip a Paper presented to our Northern Brethren on this Head; tho' it may look here like a Digression.

A Voice from the South: Or an Address from some Protestant Dissenters in England to the Kirk of Scotland.

Brethren,
AS Nothing has been more universally desir'd by us in this Nation, since the Revolution, than the happy Union now brought to pass; So nothing has been more surprizing to us, and to all that wish well to the Interest of the Protestant Religion, than the strange and unexpected Opposition

made in Scotland against the Treaty, and the yet remaining Fears and Jealousies which appear among you about it.

If Papists, Jacobites, Men of dividing Principles or jarring Interests had appear'd against the Union, it had been nothing, but what we might have had Reason to expect; but that good Men, Men of

of Religion, of Sobriety, Men that had suffer'd such severe things under the Tyranny of former Reigns, should not see in this their Day, the Things which belonged to the Civil and Religious Peace: This has indeed been Matter of Amazement to us, and all that wish you well, are under exceeding Concern about you.

This Paper is not design'd to make Reflections on things past, much less on Persons; the Design is sincere, the Method shall be friendly, and we hope you will take it with the same Temper it is offer'd, viz. A Civil Exposition, and Neighbourly Advice: If it is mistaken, the Error will lie at the Door of those, that by false Constructions, impose upon your Understandings.

The Union is now past, and all Articles between the Nations fully concluded, ratify'd, exchange'd, and recorded in both Kingdoms: And 'tis but a very few Days, that we shall, to the Envy and Disappointment of all the World, become one Nation, one Kingdom, one People, United in all our Civil Interests, and we hope, reconciled in a mutual Settlement, Security, and Establish'd Bounds of our Religious Interests.

There remains no more Struggle, no more Opposition, no Debate about the Union it self, and therefore this Paper shall say nothing to it, but as of a thing finish'd and done: The thing now before us all is, to endeavour on all sides to take the real Benefit of the Union, and not by Divisions, Distrust, and unnecessary Debates, to deprive our selves of the Advantages of it, and make it that Curse to us all, which groundless Fears have suggested, and which the open Enemies of both have desir'd.

What the present suggested Mischiefs of the Union are, how your Heads are fill'd with Distrusts of your Brethren, and with Apprehensions of Politick Designs against you, we shall not much enquire—, since the Business before us now is to heal, not to wound, to clear up Doubts, not to increase Debates; and we believe the setting things before you in a clearer Light, will bring us all to the Blessed Temper of Love, Charity and Peace, which only can make the Union a Blessing to us.

We rather therefore choose to expostulate with you of things to come, than of things past, and to entreat you not to turn this Mercy into a Judgment by too unthankful a Temper, a thing of which we have frequent Instances in the World.

And in order to this, we humbly desire you calmly to consider a few Particulars.

1. What have you to look back upon, and be thankful for, that GOD Almighty never put it into the Hearts of these Nations to unite, when Episcopacy was establish'd here among you.

And in this Head you might observe, 1. How easily it had been for the late King Charles II. or King James II. who had so Arbitrarily a Command here, and such Tools to serve them, to have brought it to pass.

2. What Use they would long since have made of such an Addition of Power to have entirely suppress'd the Presbyterian Kirk, and human Probability considered, have for ever kept her down.

2. That had an Union been so formed under the Settlement of an Episcopal Church, there had never been a legal Door open'd in these Nations to have retriev'd it, but by the Nature and Constitution of the Treaty, that Settlement had been as the Presbyterian Settlement now is, unalterable, and indissoluble, and in opposing it, both Nations had been bound to have opposed and subdued you.

3. You are desir'd to look a little back into the former precarious Condition of your own Establishment, how liable to daily Invasions at Home, and from Abroad, how mated with, and sometimes insulted by returning Prelacy, the Insolence and Numbers of Popish, Jacobite, or worse Enemies; how subject to the wav'ring and very alterable Temper of a few Gentlemen, how weakly supported, and how ill qualified or circumstanced to obtain foreign Supports, but from a Country where the Presbyterian Kirk would find but little Assistance—, and not to enter

too far into the Weakness of your Condition in that Case known well enough to your selves, we leave it under a general Note, and refer it as an Appeal to your own serious Reflection to determine about.

4. You are desired to look forward, and consider what you have to be thankful for, that the Presbyterian Settlement of *Scotland* has now received a Sanction or Recognition, even from that same Episcopal Power which alone could be suspected of a Willingness to pull her down. That you have the very Votes of the Bishops themselves to your Church Establishment, binding themselves and their Posterity, viz. The whole *English* Strength and Constitution, to uphold, support, maintain and defend you, next to Divine Protection, we cannot see how all the Policy of Man could devise for you a more substantial Security; and we do confess our selves under some Surprise, that any among you can complain for Want of Security, since the Church of *England* cannot now offer you the least Molestation, without flying in the Face of their own Constitution, unravelling their own Foundation, and dissolving a Treaty which we hope they will always have as much occasion to depend upon as any of us all.

Being thus Establish'd, we cannot think you will encourage the Murmurs and Discontents of these People, who first prophesying the evil Effects of this Union, seem themselves too willing to bring to pass their Predictions.

It is the full Persuasion of all your Brethren the Dissenters, That your Church is establish'd upon a lasting, an indissoluble, and an unalterable Foundation, and you cannot, without some Ignorance, and great Unkindness, be suspected of not desiring it should be so.

The Dissenters in *England* look upon themselves, to have but one Interest with you: And, as they have earnestly pray'd to GOD Almighty, to bring this

joyful Day to Light, so they, with their utmost Cheerfulness, are daily giving Thanks for the Blessing, as it is your Safety equally with their own; they rejoyce, that Heaven has heard their Prayers; and have no Sorrow before them, save that which arises from the Mortification they have, to see some among you not so free to joyn with them, and whose Eyes are not open to the great Blessing of this Union equally with theirs.

They are sorry, that any amongst you should attempt to lessen that mutual Confidence, which they think so absolutely necessary between you and them: And as they, on their Part, have done nothing, to cause any Suspensions of their Conduct to be justly raised, with Respect to their Brethren in *Scotland*, so they cannot but hope, the Church of *Scotland* will give some general and publick Testimony, that those Distrusts and Suggestions are far from being the Sense of the whole Body.

It cannot but be evident to every Man that has the least Sense, upon his Mind, of the present Circumstances of both Kingdoms, both Civil and Religious, That nothing can contribute more to the making us all sensible of the prosperous Effects of this Treaty, than the mutual Confidence, Harmony, and Brotherly Correspondence between all Sorts of Protestants in the whole Island, but especially between the Dissenters in *England* and the Kirk of *Scotland*, as being inseparably bound by the same Interest, and incapable to be hurt or overthrown a-funder, but to their mutual Injury, publick Weakening, and exposing them all to the Power of their Enemies: And those who are of another Opinion, are desired seriously to consider, who they are, that generally speaking, all over *Britain*, were desirous of this Union, and who against it; who are now pleas'd with it, and who snarl at; and find Fault with it, and what are their known respective Principles and Practices; but this shall be spoken to in our next.